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EXCUSES.

WELLINGTON'S maxim, that a man good at excuses is good at nothing else, was doubtless born of experience; but, like most maxims, it errs in asserting as universally true what is only generally so, and he who adopted it as a crucial test of capacity would sometimes be terribly at fault. The wit who gave our stage its best comedy—the orator who extorted the highest compliment ever paid to a speaker's eloquence by an opponent, was, as his creditors knew but too well, a consummate master of the art of making excuses. Waller, too, was no incapable man, although he could turn an excuse as cleverly as he could turn a verse; witness his answer when Charles II. complained that the loyal strains with which he welcomed the Restoration were very inferior to those in which he had glorified the Protectorate. 'I own it, your Majesty,' said the ready-witted time-server; 'poets always write better upon fiction than upon fact.' What, again, could be happier in its way than Talleyrand's excuse for having passed a lady in the street without having looked at her: 'If I had looked, I could not have passed you!' It must be owned, however, these examples might be cited as illustrations of Pope's definition of an excuse—something worse than a lie, being built upon some probability, and using a degree of truth to falsify with—in short, a lie guarded.

Flattery, coming easily enough to a poet or diplomatist, was not the forte of the American lawyer, who, called to account for displaying his contempt of the court, replied that if he had been so unfortunate, it was from inadvertence, as he studiously endeavoured to conceal his feelings. This learned gentleman would have sympathised with his brother-in-law, threatened by an irate judge with committal, for declaring his belief that the court could be bought with a peck of beans; whereupon the delinquent owned he had spoken too hastily, and begged to withdraw the obnoxious observation, with the reservation, that if he had put it at half a bushel, no power upon earth should have made him recall his words. A neater impertinence

was perpetrated by Lord Eldon in the days of his barristerhood. A young counsel, lacking in self-control, upon hearing judgment given against his client, exclaimed that he was astonished at such a decision, and was ordered by the judges to attend at the bar next morning, to answer for the irregularity. Mr Scott undertook to see his friend through this little difficulty, and when his name was called, rose and said: 'My lords, I am very sorry my young friend has so far forgotten himself as to treat your honourable bench with disrespect; he is extremely penitent, and you will kindly ascribe his unintentional insult to his ignorance. You must see at once it originated in that. He said he was surprised at the decision of your lordships. Now, if he had not been very ignorant of what takes place in this court every day—had he but known you half as long as I have done—he would not have been astonished at anything.'

These legal apologists wilfully framed their excuses so as to aggravate the original offence, a result innocently attained by a worthy old gentleman, too prone to political discussion, since he could not keep his temper while arguing. He was given, much to his after-repentance, to call those who ventured to differ with him all sorts of hard names, in the heat of debating. Upon one occasion, having favoured a neighbour in this way, as soon as he had cooled down, the old gentleman went to apologise for his outbreak, and this is how he did it: 'I am very sorry,' said he; 'pray, forgive me for always losing my temper in talking with you; but the fact is, you talk so like a jackass, I can't help it!' Still more innocent of intentional offence was the rough Tennessee soldier, who, tired of campaigning after three months' experience, asked General Thomas to grant him leave of absence, because he wanted to see his wife. 'Why, I have not seen mine for three years!' was the general's reply, intended to be conclusive. But the homesick warrior was equal to the occasion, and retorted: 'Wall, you see, me and my wife ain't that kind!' This affectionate husband would scarcely have appreciated the joke of the old Scotch judge, when one of his colleagues failed to take his seat

on the bench, leaving a brother to excuse his absence on the ground that he had lost his wife. 'Has he?' exclaimed the Lord-justice. 'That is a good excuse indeed: I wish we had all the same.'

Excuses of a similar sad sort lose something of their seriousness when couched in unusual shape. A Devonshire squire, instead of receiving a billiard cue home at the promised time from the man who had undertaken to lengthen it for him, was told by his servant: 'Please, sir, P—— has called to say he can't keep his time about doing your cue; his father's dead, and he's going to be screwed to-day, and buried to-morrow.' A Madrased clerk wrote to his superior officer to excuse his stopping away from work for a day, pleading that his grandmother had 'despatched her life,' and he 'wanted to go to firing-place to see body fired and ashes put in the hole.' The native writers of the Indian Unconquered Service would seem to know the value of exactness, for another writes: 'I humbly beg you will excuse my not attendance office this date, 'cause I got a boil as per margin. The breadth of the paper being short, I have planned the boil small, but it is double the size.' He was not willing to leave anything to the imagination; like the old pensioner of the *Hôtel des Invalides*, who excused his odd way of performing the duties of cicerone one morning by confessing that he had breakfasted with two blind comrades, and poured out the wine.

The Honourable Nyrum Reynolds, a distinguished member of the bar of Wyoming county, U.S. would have been just the man to have settled the orthographical difficulties of the Tichborne case. Taunted in court for his eccentricities in that line, this counsel said to the jury: 'The learned gentleman on the other side finds fault with my writing and spelling, as though the merits of the case depended upon such matters. I'm agin lugging in any such outside affairs, but I will say, that a man must be a great fool who can't spell a word more than one way.' This reminds us of the darkey who was chaffed about his habit of writing himself down as 'Tomas,' who put his critics down with: 'I understand all about dat, but you ought to know the 'Merican language is very unregular, and der is more dan one right way to spell a man's name in dis country.' Like the Michigan schoolmaster, Tomas was not to be silenced by a parcel of ignoramuses because he differed with the dickshunary style of spelling; but his argument was hardly so unassailable as that of the negro who justified taking a second wife somewhat suddenly upon the decease of his first, by declaring he had searched the Scriptures vainly for any promises to widowers, although he found plenty for widows, and thereupon came to the conclusion that Heaven would not waste its sympathy upon one who had it in his own power to comfort himself under bereavement; clinching matters thus: 'Besides, brethren, I thought poor Patsey was just as dead as ever she would be'—a fact there was no gainsaying; which is more than can be said of that advanced by the dame of eighty as an excuse for taking a mate of the same age to love

and to cherish, that the old gentleman was about her place so often, that if they did not go to church, folks would be sure to talk.

President Lincoln once got into conversation with a negro on board a steamboat, and finding he had served in a regiment that suffered severely at the battle of Fort Donnellson, asked if he was in that fight. The darkey owned he had had a little taste of it; and then the following colloquy ensued: 'Stood your ground, did you?' 'No, sa, I runs!' 'Run at the first fire?' 'Yes, sa, and would ha' run sonna had I knowed it comin'.' 'If our soldiers were all like you, traitors might have broken up the government without resistance.' 'Yes, sa; dar would hab been no help for it. I wouldn't put my life in de scale 'gainst any government dat ever existed, for no government could make up de loss.' 'Do you think your company would have missed you if you had been killed?' 'Maybe not, sa; a dead white man ain't much to dese sogers, let alone a dead nigga; but I'd ha' missed myself, and dat was de pint wid me!' Mr Planché's Irish coachman took much the same view of things: when a traveller, seeing him fold an extraordinary comforter round his neck, remarked that he took very good care of himself; Pat replied: 'To be sure I do, sir; what's all the world to a man when his wife's a widdy?'

Palmer the actor would not have come under the ban as a man good at excuse-making. One day, while busy in his garden at Kentish-town, he was stung in the eye by a wasp, with such effect that he was obliged to send word to the theatre that it would be impossible for him to appear on the stage that evening. The customary apology on account of sudden indisposition was made by the manager. A pittite, however, was incredulous, and rising in his place, loudly gave his disbelief expression, until the audience, convinced they were being deceived, became uproarious, and insisted upon seeing the actor himself; so the manager was obliged to fetch him. When Palmer walked on the stage, the people saw no sign of any ailment, and hissed him unmercifully. As soon as quiet could be restored, Palmer, advancing to the footlights, addressed the house briefly, and, as he thought, to the purpose, with: 'Ladies and gentlemen, I am aware of the odd effect my appearance here may produce after the apology which has been made for my illness, which I thought it hardly possible to describe by communication to the theatre.' Here he was interrupted by shouts of, 'No wonder!' 'Shame!' 'What's the matter?' 'The fact is, ladies and gentlemen, my illness was all my eye!' Of course, the impatient people interpreted the dubious expression their own way, and a scene of confusion resulted easier to be imagined than described. For once, at least, Palmer achieved the height of an actor's ambition, and brought down the house.

Very odd excuses are sometimes put forward in courts of justice. A French Republican, condemned to death for murdering his wife and child without extenuating circumstances, demurred to the sentence, because capital punishment had been abolished in France for political offences, and he had killed his wife and child for no other reason but because they were Legitimists. An Irishman accused of perpetrating a bigamous marriage, justified the act on the ground that he was not a consenting party at his first wedding; the friends of the lady

who claimed him for her own, having carried him before a priest one night, and married him spite of his resistance! A thief charged with stealing a Bible, pleaded he had been led away by his pious propensities. At Liverpool, a publican, summoned for having sundry false measures in his possession, declared he only used them for those who got drunk upon credit; and a greengrocer excused his use of a false beam because new potatoes were so dear, that he could make no profit out of them, unless he cheated his customers a little. A witness told by the judge he must not speak so quickly, as it was impossible for him to follow him, replied: 'I can't help it, my lord; I've got an impediment in my speech. I had it since I was born!' Another, charged by the examining counsel with prevaricating, asked how he could help prevaricating when he had lost three of his front teeth! This witness must surely have been own brother to the gentleman who, using the wine at a public dinner not wisely but too well, was called to order for indulging in language more free than polite. 'I beg pardon,' said he; 'I did not mean to say what I did say; but I have had the misfortune to lose some of my front teeth, and words get out every now and then without my knowledge.'

We do not suppose an army was ever yet defeated without plenty of proof being forthcoming that it ought to have been victorious, but it would be hard to beat the way in which a Yankee, bragging of his countrymen's warlike achievements, disposed of the Englishman's reminder that they got the worst of it at Long Island. 'Well, yes,' said he, 'you did whip us there; but then, you see, in that battle the Americans somehow didn't seem to take any interest in the fight.' This was as pure an invention as the story with which Dr Chalmers's aunt averted the punctuality-loving doctor's wrath, when she came down late to breakfast. She laid the blame of her bedkeeping upon a dream, exclaiming, before he had time to speak: 'Oh, Mr Chalmers, I had such a strange dream; I dreamt that you were dead! I dreamt that the funeral-day was named, the hour fixed, the funeral cards sent out. Then the day came, the folk came, and the hour came; but what do you think happened? Why, the clock had scarce done chapping twelve, the time named in the invitations, when a loud knocking was heard inside the coffin, and a voice came out of it, saying: "Twelve's chappit, and ye're no liftin'!"' Both these ingenious excuses lacked the basis of probability, without which no excuse can be held to be a good one, and therefore cannot contest the palm with Barham's apologetic explanation, when called to account by his college tutor for his absence from morning chapel. 'The fact is, sir, you are too late for me; I cannot sit up till seven o'clock in the morning. I am a man of regular habits, and unless I get to bed by four or five at latest, I am fit for nothing next day!' This deserves bracketing with Charles Lamb's well-known justification of his late appearance in Leadenhall Street: 'You must remember, sir, I am always the first to leave!' Quaint excuses were quite in Elia's way. When a correspondent of the *London Magazine* claimed the London Templar for a Wiltshire man and a brother, Elia repudiated the construction put upon his words. 'By the word "native," I may be supposed to mean a town where I might have been born, or where it might be desirable that I should have been born, as being situated in wholesome air,

upon a dry, chalky soil, in which I delight; or a town with the inhabitants of which I passed some weeks, a summer or two ago, so agreeably, that they and it became in a manner native to me. Without some such latitude of interpretation, I see not how we can avoid falling into a gross error in physics, as to conceive that a gentleman may be born in two places, from which all modern and ancient testimony is alike abhorrent.' Having said this much in explanation, Lamb adds (let clever folk who think to bolster up their theory of an author's private life by internal evidence, ponder his words), that he hath not so fixed his nativity—like a rusty vane—to one dull spot, but that, if he sees occasion, or the argument demands it, he will be born again, in future papers, in whatever place, and at whatever period shall seem good unto him.

Little Pat Lowe's excuse for not making short work of a foe at Sabugal was as perfect as an excuse could be. Patrick, full private in the Fifty-second Regiment, failing to make the running with his comrades, pursued by the enemy's cavalry, when they took shelter behind a wall, ensconced himself behind a tree-stump. A French dragoon had taken a strong fancy to the stout little Irishman, and tried all he knew to make him waste his fire, but Pat contented himself with covering the enemy until the Fifty-second, advancing in full force, the French horsemen retired with all speed, Pat's particular friend among them. Astonished at the latter getting away scot-free, an officer of the Fifty-second asked our hero how he could be such a fool as not to shoot that Frenchman. 'Is it shooting, ye mane, sir?' asked he. 'Sure, how could I shoot him when I wasn't loaded?'

AN OLD MAN'S DARLING.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER II.—ETHEL'S SECOND CONQUEST.

DR ANTROBUS was a philosopher, and by no means easily flustered or excited; but his pulse certainly throbbed faster than usual as he was leaving the felucca. He had no doubt whatever of the truth of the wife's suspicions; that she had taken poison for some time back in increasing doses, he knew for certain; no suicide has ever been known to kill him or her self painfully, by inches, when speedier methods were at hand. There was no one about her but her husband; he had a direct interest in her death, being almost a lad, tied up to an old woman whom he had married for money, which she withheld; lastly, he had not yet quite stifled his conscience, and to a student of physiognomy his face proclaimed his guilt.

Now, crime did not, as a rule, make the doctor's blood curdle; he was a little too apt to look upon it as a curious and interesting branch of social science, to be classified and experimented on, and treated as a disease rather than punished. But he could not stand slow-poisoning; that was the one sort of murder with which he had no patience. That a mortal being, framed like himself, belonging to the same species, having the same propensities, subject to similar emotions of love, pity, generosity, should be able to live on terms of daily friendliness with his victim, to soothe her fears with tender words, to profess anxiety, to watch the effect of the doses, and increase, diminish, or temporarily stop them in the way best calculated to prevent suspicion,

was to him a horror which made the most brutal cuttings, stabbings, stranglings, mild and venial by the contrast.

In less than twenty-four hours his time was up, for the steamer which was to take him back to Gibraltar sailed on the following afternoon from Messina, which port was some ten miles distant by land from the small inn where he had been staying, and close to which he was presently landed. It had been his intention to go over in the morning, but he now felt that there was not a moment to be lost if the murderer was to be brought to justice, or his victim saved. Of the last, he had little hope—the poison had got too much hold of her already—still there was a chance. So he ordered a horse and guide, and packed his saddle-bags at once. In vain the innkeeper remonstrated: the roads were bad, and not entirely free from banditti. The doctor shewed his pistols, and replied that he had a better chance of making his way past any people who tried to intercept him in the dark than by daylight, for that matter. Besides, it was a question of life or death, and he had no choice but to go.

Never had he felt so vexed and perturbed as during that gloomy ride; he was thoroughly dissatisfied with himself for not having made inquiries concerning names, relatives, dates, residence in England, &c. before the husband's return. True that he had had very little time, and the poor lady's illness and hysterical emotion had rendered the task of questioning her a tedious one; but still he fancied now that he might have gleaned more information. At present, all the clue he had was a presumption that the yacht had been hired at Naples. He had questioned the fishermen whose boat he had hired, and his landlord; but they knew nothing beyond the fact, that the felucca had come into the anchorage the evening before, and that the young Englishman had spent the day on shore with his gun.

His disquietude culminated when a puff of air, which at first merely breathed upon his face, strengthened and strengthened till he had to press his hat on. If the owner of the yacht had the slightest suspicion of what had passed in his absence, he would up anchor and away at the first breath. Had he been over-cautious, after all? Would it not have been the better course to denounce the fellow to his face, and seek to carry off his victim? The attempt must have failed; four sailors had brought him back, which made a crew of six; he was armed, while the doctor, having no weapon, and unable to rely on the two fishermen, hired only for the hour to help him, would have been in the falsest position possible. No; he adopted the wisest, the only plan in seeking to keep the poisoner in ignorance that his crime was suspected until he could return armed with proper authority, and the power to interfere. And of this he had good hope, for he had a friend residing at Messina who was a man of wealth and influence.

The innkeeper had exaggerated the difficulties of the road, and in two hours the doctor reached his friend's house. He was welcomed very heartily, but his business was not so well received. 'What! arrest an English subject on board his own yacht; take his own wife away from him, and accuse him of attempting to murder her! Many a town had been bombarded for much less. Then suppose the charge could not be substantiated?'

While they were discussing the matter, the captain of a British frigate which was cruising on the station came in, and when he was referred to, espoused the doctor's side. He saw perfectly that there was a chance of getting into a legal scrape, but agreed that it was worth some risk to save a woman from being poisoned like a rat, and said he was willing to take his share of it. The worst of the business was, that it was a hundred to one the yacht would be out of sight by daylight with that breeze.

There is no use in detailing how they roused a Sicilian official from his slumbers, and persuaded him to take action in the matter, for the captain's surmise was correct, and when the bay where the felucca had lain was visited in the morning, there was not a sail to be seen.

It was with a heavy heart that Dr Antrobus started that afternoon for Gibraltar.

The house at Hawkshaw was dull for a long while after the owner left it. Dr Antrobus, though a reserved and silent man at dinner-parties and tea-fights, which he hated, was a delightful companion at home, and his aunt and his ward missed him terribly, the girl most; for though Granny believed in her nephew to any extent, hers was a blind faith. Whatever he said must be right, and any one who averred the contrary was a wilful heretic, and wanted burning. But as for entering into the why or the wherefore, I do honestly think, without exaggeration, that such an idea, supposing the possibility of its getting into her head, would have turned all the brains. She did not even know the names of the sciences for which he was distinguished, or the societies which honoured him. Ethel, on the contrary, studied the newspaper for mention of his name, read the reports of associations and meetings connected with him that she found there, asked him for explanation of what she did not understand, and, in a word, enlisted her reason in the service of her love and admiration. She could not hope ever to comprehend all, but she did a part, and might include more and more. Girls are generally far more intelligent than boys, but there can be no doubt that Ethel was very much in advance of her age. Her education had fostered her natural abilities. She had never been crammed; nor kept, against her will, to irksome tasks; nor snubbed when she asked questions; nor told that she must take this or that for granted because her elders affirmed it. Her father had made a little companion of her; never involving what he was about in any air of mystery, yet never bothering her with it unless she shewed interest and 'wanted to know.' And Dr Antrobus had fallen naturally into similar habits with the child, only his power of explaining things simply was far superior to Mr Scaraby's. Indeed, he would have made a capital Polytechnic lecturer, if he had gone in for that style of business. Added to this, he was a big child himself, and enjoyed a game of the simplest character, or a fairy tale for its own sake, and not merely because it pleased his small companion. No wonder Ethel felt as if two-thirds of her interest in life had been swept away when her guardian left; and a considerable part of the remaining portion attached to the arrival of the mails. The doctor behaved well, and wrote on every opportunity, while Ethel was never without an epistle on the stocks.

The much-indulged girl found her masters with their regular tasks very irksome at first, but Granny,

as she continued to call Miss Antrobus, discovered a sure method of keeping her up to the collar.

'How pleased Uncle Gregory will be if you can play Thalberg to him (or read Italian, or German, or French with him), when he comes back.'

So Ethel became an accomplished young lady, and her industry brought its own reward, for learning is only irksome when we attack it listlessly; for those who put their hearts into it, it is always a pleasure. Not that she was a recluse, entirely shut out from all the pleasures and amusements common to girls of her age. Hawkshaw was not a dissipated place, but people did meet at one another's houses, where the elders played whist, and their juniors less absorbing games. There was an archery club, too, of which Ethel was a member, and gained prizes (not a difficult matter, by-the-by, for they had them for all shades of proficiency, and there were few blanks); picnic and nutting parties were not uncommon; an occasional entertainment, more or less dramatic in character, enlivened the town-hall of a neighbouring borough, and formed an excuse for an evening's outing; and though the word ball would have frightened the leading houses into fits, for Hawkshaw was puritan, a juvenile party, where dancing formed the principal amusement, was not considered worldly. And the interpretation of the word juvenile was free. Then there was the Honourable Mrs Trefoil, a lady with an aquiline nose, and other traces of former beauty; a fine woman still, though old enough to have once been a toast. While her husband, who was a Whig place-hunter, lived, she had held a conspicuous position in a somewhat distinguished coterie; and if Trefoil had only been able to take her brains about with him, his parliamentary career might have been a success instead of a failure. She coached him, indeed, admirably, but every now and then he rashly insisted upon having an opinion of his own, and that spoiled his prospects. So he got no return for the capital sunk in electioneering and dinner-giving; and died with his property so much impaired, that his childless widow was glad to retire from a world where she could no longer make much of a figure, to the neighbourhood of quiet Hawkshaw. This dame having taken a great fancy to Ethel, shewed civility to Granny, who was rather afraid of her, and insisted on calling her 'My Lady.' To Ethel, however, she was merely a good-natured, friendly neighbour, who gave very pleasant little parties, and whose carriage was useful in the flower-show season. Beyond and above all, on two several occasions Mrs Trefoil turned the gloomy midwinter into joy and gladness by carrying Granny and Ethel bodily off to London, and giving them a glimpse of (theatrical) fairy-land.

Two years passed; the doctor still remained in Africa, and the last petals of childhood fell from Ethel; a fact which was first brought home to poor Granny by the intrusion into their peaceful life of a lover.

At one of the friendly lawn-parties given by Mrs Trefoil in the summer months, there appeared a stranger, who fluttered the Hawkshaw dovecot, which knew only the cooings of two curates, an assistant-surgeon, and the second son of a neighbouring squire, now an undergraduate, and intended for the bar, and who might be fit for the matrimonial market in twenty years or so, if all went

well. Dudley was the stranger's name; he had no profession; dressed well; rode a valuable-looking horse; was tall, handsome, with very white teeth, and a very black moustache, and a certain keen expression in his eyes which always makes a man pass for romantic; above all, was single.

There were eight young ladies between the ages of seventeen and twenty-five at that little fête, and seven of them were immediately prepossessed in this Mr Dudley's favour. The eighth, who shuddered at him, was Ethel, who had a prejudice against dark men, and thought there was something especially Mephistophelean about this one's expression. With the perversity which is so common in such matters, she was the only one who attracted his attention, and his admiration was so decided, that almost all the people present noticed it. The fact was the more remarkable that Ethel was by no means the best-looking or the finest girl present; after knowing her for a little while, one thought her very pretty and winsome, but she did not strike people generally at first. True, that she was rather a good match, having no near relatives, and her property, when she came of age, being entirely at her own disposal. But how was an utter stranger to know that?

It is very rash to lay down general rules in such matters, but I think that a man of twenty-six or thirty, of good manners, and a certain experience, could, being in earnest, almost always make a girl ten years younger than himself take him for a lover, provided she was fancy free. It is the old story of nature abhorring a vacuum, in the heart or anywhere. At anyrate, Mr Dudley managed to talk Ethel's first aversion away that very afternoon, and the next time they met her only feeling was, that she was going to have an agreeable chat. Soon, whenever she went into company, she looked for him, and she seldom looked fruitlessly, for the young man rarely missed a chance of meeting her.

He had been asked to stay at Mrs Trefoil's for a couple of days only, but when he left he did not go far. He possessed a few hundred acres in another county, and wished to farm them himself, if the present tenant, who was in a very precarious state of health, should die. It was therefore requisite that he should study practical farming, and for that purpose he took up his abode with Mr John Higgins, a substantial yeoman, whose homestead was not a mile out of the village. But as the time of year was not favourable for the study of top-dressing and subsoil draining, the agricultural neophyte had plenty of time on his hands, which he devoted to the cultivation of his neighbours. His attentions to Ethel became so marked, that Mrs Trefoil thought it right to call upon Miss Antrobus, and say what she knew of the young man. It was not much: he was a cousin of her late husband's; was pretty well off, though not exactly rich; and had been educated abroad, where his parents, who were both dead, had resided. Indeed, she believed that his mother was a Frenchwoman.

Poor Granny was dreadfully dismayed. 'But, my Lady,' she said, when she could utter, 'Ethel is only a child!'

'Quite right, dear Miss Antrobus,' replied Mrs Trefoil; 'you have the law on your side. But the law is very often opposed to nature and common-sense, and we cannot do any good by shutting our

eyes to the fact, that our dear Ethel, though theoretically an infant, is practically a woman.

'But, my Lady, her guardian, Dr Antrobus, is away, and nothing of that kind can be talked about till he comes back. O dear, O dear!'

But Mr Dudley had no idea of pushing delicacy to the extent Granny desired. On the contrary, he was very earnest and persevering, and there did not seem to be any rational excuse for getting rid of him; he was of suitable age and means, conducted himself with propriety, and had been introduced by the one lady who represented aristocracy at Hawkshaw. Several aggravating neighbours called upon Miss Antrobus, and congratulated her on the conquest Ethel had made, thereby adding greatly to her perplexity. 'Would it then really be a good thing if the girl married this man?' she asked herself perpetually through several sleepless nights; and the only conclusion she could come to was, that there was something improper and shocking in the idea of an orphan young lady forming any attachment while her guardian was in Africa, and she was sure the right-minded Ethel would never do such a thing. So the subject was never mentioned between them until Ethel herself broached it.

I don't suppose that any girl had ever thought less about love and marriage than she had before Dudley paid his court to her, and so she was taken unawares. It was certainly pleasant to be appreciated; to meet with a fellow-creature who thought all she did perfect, all she said wise and witty; who, when in her presence, was in a state of rapt enchantment, when absent from her, wretched. He said all this, and she believed him; for what object could he have in deceiving her? Her power over this man affected her strangely; it certainly would not be a hard fate, she thought, to spend her life with a companion who was so very fond of her. If she had to marry, and most women had, it seemed, it would certainly be better to marry a man thus infatuated, than one who took a more commonplace view of her attractions and duties. And then, poor fellow, he would be so very miserable if she rejected, and so supremely happy if she accepted him, that it seemed positively inhuman to say No.

Not being a she Nero then, and Dudley driving her into a corner, she said Yes.

'O Ethel, Ethel!' cried Granny, shedding tears of distress at the news; 'and Uncle Gregory in Africa!'

'Of course, Granny dear, if Uncle Gregory disapproves, there is an end of the matter, for I am certain that he would not do so without good reasons; and he will come home very soon now. Richard is going to call on you, dear.'

'She calls him Richard!' cried Granny, and went into hysterics.

Dr Antrobus was hardly less perturbed than his sister when he received the letter informing him of his ward's engagement. Absorbed as he had been by the congenial inquiries which had occupied him the last two years, his heart had constantly turned homewards with a yearning which grew stronger and stronger as the time for his return drew near. Of course, if the question had been put to him, he would have said that Ethel must now be a woman, and that he supposed she would soon be carried off by a husband; but yet he had never fairly recognised the idea; he associated her with everything belonging to himself and his

home; indeed, she *was* his home; for his aunt engaged his affections in a very inferior degree, and now he felt at first as if he had been personally robbed and injured. As, however, he was an eminently just and reasonable man, this feeling was soon quelled; and he resigned himself with a sigh to the inevitable. 'Of course she would not remain a child for ever,' he said to himself; 'she was sure to form new ties, and forget her old friend some day. Why, I am not even a distant relative. It is a mistake to love anything but science.'

One November evening they were snug at Hawkshaw; the fire crackled, the curtains were drawn, the lamp burned clearly. Granny was engaged, as was her wont, in adding row upon row to a prodigious piece of network, the completed part of which was rolled up into an enormous globe. Ethel sat before a framed canvas upon which she was embroidering silk flowers. An open piano with music on it looked like a familiar instrument, not a fetish; and the books scattered about were likewise evidently in the habit of being read.

'Is Mr Dudley coming to tea?' Granny asked.

'He said he would,' replied Ethel.

A pause of half a minute; then said the elder lady: 'How soon did you say we might expect him to arrive?'

Now, *him* was not the lover, as you might naturally expect from the former sentence, but Dr Antrobus, who had announced his immediate return to England. Some girls, especially if much infatuated, would have answered crookedly; but Ethel knew where Granny's thoughts were, and was *not* much infatuated. So she answered, looking up with animation this time: 'The ship is due at Southampton on Wednesday, the day after tomorrow, and he might possibly come home the same evening. Oh, if ships were like railway trains, and arrived punctually, how nice it would be to go and meet him, would it not?'

'Yes; and yet, perhaps we should be in the way: there will be a great deal of luggage, specimens and things, will there not?'

'Oh, I could help him with that, or, at least, I am sure I should not hinder him. But we cannot do it, for we might just miss him, instead of meeting him sooner.'

'Exactly, my dear,' said Granny, much relieved; for she had once been on a quay when a vessel was unloading, and had been so bustling and frightened, that she had not recovered her composure a week afterwards.

'Or else,' resumed Ethel, 'when you have been away for a long time, it must be very pleasant to see friendly faces the first thing when you— Who can that be?'

A carriage had stopped at the door, which was a phenomenon sufficient to break off any sentence. Then there was a knock and a ring, and a footstep on the stairs. Then the door was flung wide, and a man, bearded, bronzed, and wrapped in an outlandish cloak, stood in the room.

'Uncle Gregory!' cried Ethel, running at him.

'It isn't William!' said Granny. 'It can't be William!' as she looked at his beard. 'It is William!' as the outlandish cloak was thrown off, and the shepherd's plaid trousers, and the tail-coat, and the shirt collar drooping on one side, came in evidence.

'And can this fine young woman really be the little thing I met in the churchyard; and who

drew sixpenny cheques on the Hawshaw bank without having a balance!' said the doctor, when the first greetings were over.

'I have developed, Uncle Gregory; that is all. But how nice and quick your ship has been; we did not expect you before Wednesday at the earliest.'

'I have come overland,' replied Dr Antrobus. 'After I had written my last letter, one of our party, a Frenchman, asked me to go on to Paris with him to give certain evidence which he wanted, promising that I should not be delayed in the long-run. And he has kept his word, you see.'

If Ethel had thought of it, she would have quietly gone out of the room, and told the servant to explain to Dudley when he came what had happened, so that he might see the advisableness of not intruding upon the master of the house in the first moments of his arrival. But in the surprise and excitement she forgot all about her lover till he was announced, and then it was too late.

Seeing a stranger in the room, Dudley paused near the door, till Ethel said: 'This is Dr Antrobus, Richard;' when he advanced and bowed.

Dr Antrobus did not return his salute. He had risen from his chair when the door opened, and now he stood erect, frowning, and surprised.

'Who is that man?' he asked, in quick commanding tones, such as neither Granny nor Ethel had ever heard from him before.

'That is Mr Dudley,' said the old lady, much distressed. 'Don't you know? Don't you remember?'

'What are you doing here?' continued the doctor, not heeding.

'Sir!' said the young man, flushing red.

'What have you done with your wife?'

At that question the colour faded out of Dudley's cheeks, and the anger out of his eyes. Ethel looked from one man to the other in astonishment; she thought her guardian had gone mad, till she heard the other's astounding reply: 'I had—the misfortune—to—lose her,' he stammered.

'MURDERER!' cried the doctor.

Dudley felt the extreme folly of allowing himself to be cowed and confused; but the whole thing had come so suddenly upon him that he was utterly unable to pull himself together, even sufficiently for bluster.

'Is not one victim sufficient for you?' continued Dr Antrobus.

'I don't know what you mean,' said Dudley with an effort.

'Then I will tell you. I have no wish to speak in enigmas.—Ethel, this man who has sought you in marriage has already had a wife. She was much older than himself, but she was rich; so he took her abroad, yachting; carefully got rid of all witnesses, and poisoned her.'

'Who and what are you, who dare utter these calumnies!' cried Dudley, finding a courage in desperation at last.

'I am the man who saw your victim in your absence, off the coast of Sicily; who met you on the deck of your own yacht when you returned—do you not remember me?—who would have saved her, if not too late, and brought you to punishment, had not the rising wind enabled you to fly.'

'I did not fly; I left for change of air, because my wife was worse. She was not in her right

mind; you were imposed upon by the ravings of a mad woman.'

'God forbid that I should condemn any man unheard, however much appearances might be against him. But your wife was dying when I saw her, from the effects of a poison I can name, and that poison was in her food. I secured a portion, and analysed it. Who attempted her life, if you did not? Who else had an interest in her death?'

'I—I do not believe she was poisoned at all. I—I— Prove it, prove your slander.'

The doctor waited for awhile to hear if he had anything further to say, and then he raised his right arm, and pointed to the door.

'Out of my house, assassin,' he said. 'The vengeance of man may fail to reach you, but the justice of God is sure.' And Dudley slunk from the house.

The doctor turned round: Granny was lying on the sofa in hysterics; Ethel stood erect, pale as death, and trembling in every limb.

'I would have spared you this scene, my dear child, if I could,' said he, taking her by the hand; 'but perhaps it is best as it is.'

'O yes!' she replied. She had read Dudley's guilt in his face.

Dr Antrobus found out the murdered woman's relatives, and communicated with them, and they desired to prosecute; but the lawyers decided that there was no legal evidence, unless the body could be discovered, and as it had, in all probability, been committed to the sea, this was impossible.

So Dudley escaped, and it was years before they heard of him again. But he had gorged the hook of the devil, who only gave him line for a time. The stings of conscience drove him to dissipation, dissipation brought him to want, want to further crime, and though he cheated the gallows, he was condemned to penal servitude for life.

All Hawshaw knew of Ethel's engagement to Dudley, and the girl chafed under the general complacent sympathy, expressed or understood, so that her spirits and health suffered. The doctor observed this, and moved to London, where she in time got over the shock; but she was no longer the same for him. If it had not been for that two years' absence, he might have felt towards her like a relative to the end of the chapter. As it was, he, who had flattered himself that he was above such sentimental nonsense, fell in love with her. There could be no mistake about it; her figure pursued him everywhere, in the laboratory, in the dissecting-room, on the mountain-side. Worst sign of all, when young men made themselves agreeable to her, he felt a pang of jealousy; and when, as happened twice in three years, she rejected good offers, he felt glad, and not sorry.

At the end of those three years Granny died, and the doctor felt in a very awkward position; he did not know what to do with this ward, whom he was in love with.

So he cut the Gordian knot by tying another; I mean, that he married her.

It came about very simply.

'I wish, my dear, I was just twenty years younger,' he said one day.

'Why?' Ethel asked.

'Because, then, we should be about of an age, and I could ask you to be my wife.'

'I don't like boys.'

'Wise girl. "Better be an old man's darling than

a young man's snarling." There is rhyme and reason in the proverb, though snarling, as a noun, is a poetical license.

'The idea of your calling yourself an old man!' said Ethel, when all was satisfactorily arranged.

'Past forty, my love, past forty. Fancy taking the complaint so late in life!'

Ethel went to the piano, and sang:

Forty times over let Michaelmas pass;
Grizzling hair the brain doth clear.
Then you know a boy an ass,
Then you know the worth of a lass,
Once you have come to forty year.

Ethel herself is nearly forty now, and the doctor is sixty; and up to this date neither has once regretted what some kind friends called at the time their ill-assorted union.

A FRENCH PUBLIC SCHOOL.

It would be impossible in a few lines to give any adequate notion of a great system of education in any country. But before describing a visit to a Parisian school, a very slight mention of the whole subject may be useful. Education in France, for the higher classes of society, is carried out somewhat in the following manner. The head of all education is the Minister of Public Instruction, who is aided in his duties by a Council of Public Instruction; then follow certain subordinate councils, known respectively as the Academic Councils and Departmental Councils. The educating of the people thus forms one great state department, entirely taken out of the hands of private persons; each individual concerned with it, from the lowest usher to the most learned professor, is a government official, responsible, through various subordinate stages, to the chief minister. The institutions by which the work of teaching is carried out are *Lycées* and Communal Colleges: the two differ but little, except that the teaching in the colleges does not reach so high a grade as that of the *Lycées*. There are also a few private institutions, usually in the hands of some religious body, such as the Jesuits' school at Vaugirard; but even here, the course of instruction follows much the same track as in the actual state schools; many of the same professors are employed; and being subject to state inspection, and certain other official requirements, they are really semi-governmental institutions. In the city of Paris there are six great ancient and celebrated *Lycées*: Louis le Grand, Napoléon, S. Louis, Charlemagne, Bonaparte, and Bourbon; and two colleges, Stanislas and Rollin. At these, with the exception of Charlemagne and Bonaparte, the pupils are either *externes* or *internes*, who are subdivided into *pensionnaires* and *demi-pensionnaires*; the latter being boarders who do not sleep in the *Lycée*, but, in all other respects, are like *pensionnaires* and *externes*, who come simply for the lectures, and live and receive tuition more comfortably and under more parental supervision at some of the numerous boarding-houses which are to be found

in the neighbourhood of the *Lycées*. The staff of a *Lycée* is twofold, administrative and tutorial. The first comprises the *proviseur*—who is the chief manager—the *censeur*, and the *économé*, or steward. Their duties are entirely confined to the general management and supervision of the school in all except educational matters. The tutorial part contains, firstly, the professors or lecturers, and *professeurs titulaires*, who are assistant-lecturers and tutors. Neither of these have any other duties than to teach; and in order to attain one of these posts, they must have passed an examination in the subjects and manner of teaching, and have attained the age of twenty-five. Among them are many distinguished literary and scientific men, whom the outer world knows not as lecturers at a Paris *Lycée*, but as authors and savants of European fame. Under them are the *maîtres d'étude*, or ushers, who act as ever-watchful guardians of the boys, old and young, by night and day, in school-hours and in play-time, but who take no part whatever in the duty of teaching. There are also two chaplains, who perform the services, and lecture twice a week; but those boys who do not belong to the Roman Catholic religion are allowed to receive instruction from ministers of their own denomination; difficulties on religious points do not seem to be one of the educational stumbling-blocks of France.

Suppose we take now the *Lycée Louis le Grand*; it will shew very clearly the general working of secondary public instruction in France; and a short description of the building and arrangements, as I saw them on a somewhat gloomy February morning, will make the account more vivid. The *Lycée Louis le Grand* stands in the centre of the scholastic part of Paris: on every side is something to remind the stranger that he has quitted the gay for the grave; the streets are known as the Rue de l'Ecole de Médecine, Rue Laplace, and by other names, each savouring of learning. The *Lycée* itself faces the narrow, ill-paved Rue S. Jacques, and externally differs much from the fresh-looking *Lycée S. Louis*, half-way up the Boulevard S. Michel. It still remains, however, the largest of all the Parisian schools, containing about one thousand scholars, and continues as famous and well conducted as when it was the Jesuit school of Clermont, and Louis le Grand visiting it, and exclaiming: 'C'est mon collège,' the next morning saw, with Jesuitical tact, the words engraved on the stone front, 'Louis le Grand.'

Let us suppose, then, that any boy—we will call him Louis Delorme—has reached the age of seven, and that his parents have determined that he shall go through the whole course of the *Lycée*. He enters, and is forthwith placed in the lowest class of the division 'Elémentaire,' the *classe préparatoire*; from thence, he proceeds into the eighth and seventh; and is then transferred into the sixth class, the lowest of the next division, that of 'Grammaire,' but not until he has passed a satisfactory examination in what he has been taught since he

entered the school. He now quickly passes through the sixth, seventh, and eighth classes; and we hope to find him, at the age of fourteen, fit, if he likes, to go upwards into the 'Division Supérieure,' and continue his studies, or to be turned out into the world sufficiently learned to pursue a mercantile career. In France, as in England, this is supposed to require less culture and more years of practice than any other profession, though it sounds almost a truism to say that those whose daily avocations do not lead them towards literature or science, and the tastes which they induce, are those who most need their refining effects in leisure hours or later life. Young Louis has, then, thoroughly learnt, or is supposed to have done so, the subjects given in the prospectus, which now lies before me, and from which the following extract is taken: 'In the first two divisions, the subjects of study are—Reading, Writing, and the recitation of select extracts; the elements of French, Latin, and Greek Grammar explained by authors from each language; Sacred and Ancient History, and that of France; Geography, the elements of Arithmetic, and a little Geometry; Drawing from nature, and Lineal Drawing; together with Vocal Music and a course of Gymnastics. The study of modern languages begins in the first classes, and goes on regularly to the sixth, by means of a practical teaching, so that at the end of his course of study a pupil will know perfectly whatever language he may have chosen. It is even possible for quick and hard-working boys to carry away with them an accurate acquaintance both of German and English.' Again another examination, and our young friend is safely in this highest division, and passes with credit through the third and second classes, through those of rhetoric and philosophy, where he has had opportunities of learning, in addition to the subjects already mentioned, but in a more advanced form, philosophy, mathematical sciences, chemistry, and natural history. Being a hard-working and clever boy, he has at the earliest period possible, when he left the class of philosophy, taken both the degrees of Baccalauréat ès Lettres and ès Sciences, degrees quite equal to those of a 'passman' at an English university. He is now twenty years old, and has any liberal career open to him.

But the whole of this regular course was not obligatory, for, had he so wished, he might, after a certain period, have taken up one special subject, with a view to some particular profession. This would have fitted him to enter the Military School of S. Cyr, the Ecole Forestière, or any one of the special colleges which are attached to most of the professions in any way under the control of the state. The cost of this education is both directly and indirectly cheaper than in England—directly, because the charges are very small; indirectly, because the teaching is far superior as a whole to the best which we can obtain here; and indirectly also from the fact, that the boys have no opportunities of spending money in expensive amusements or luxuries, which, though perhaps hardly expenses

—yet add considerably to the cost of a school education, such as boating or cricket clothes, fittings of studies, and the thousand and one odds and ends which any parent can easily call to mind.

A pensionnaire in the elementary division pays—and this is inclusive of board, lodging, tuition, class-books, stationery, and gymnastic lessons—the very small sum of one thousand francs (forty pounds) per annum; in the next division, twelve hundred francs (L.48); in the next, fourteen hundred francs (L.56), and if he studies special mathematics, fifteen hundred francs (sixty pounds)—all these charges being, I need hardly remind the reader, regulated by the state. The charge for the externes is extremely small; for instance, by a recent decree (August 10, 1872), to take the highest and lowest divisions only, the sum payable is only four hundred and fifty francs (eighteen pounds) and two hundred and seventy francs in round numbers (eleven pounds); and again I repeat, this education is not only cheap, but good; and though, as I shall presently shew, we may congratulate ourselves upon the superiority of our school arrangements as regards the social condition of the boys, yet, from an educational point of view, our system of teaching can scarcely be considered equal to that of France. There are yet, however, some extras. On entering the Lycée, a scholar pays a lump sum of ten francs to the library, which he can then use during the whole of his stay; then there are music, fencing, dancing, riding, which includes both *leçons au manège* and promenade; divisions and lessons at which an English school-boy would be apt to laugh exceedingly, associating as he does riding and learning to ride with rough ponies and 'meets' with the hounds. Lastly, comes swimming, and, as a matter of fact, every boy becomes an adept in this art before he leaves school. Etonians and Radleians alone, of all the mass of English schoolboys, learn it regularly. It would be well were it introduced into every school in England; but, as long as we continue, with a strange neglect of natural opportunities, not to utilise the rivers which flow past our doors in a decent manner—as is done by means of open baths on the continent—we shall never get swimming taught in schools where it would be necessary first to construct baths at a considerable cost. These are all the extras of any moment. I will now go on to describe my visit, which will afford me an opportunity of adding any particulars which I learnt of the social state of the boys. But, firstly, this fact ought to be mentioned, for it is both important and difficult for us to understand, who are accustomed to see a boy's position in the school regulated by his powers and application to work. For all what may be termed social purposes, such as preparing lessons, playing, eating, sleeping, there are entirely separate divisions, according to the ages of the boys. Such a system as this must tend to produce a deadening effect on the work of the Lycée, by giving to prominence in studies no other reward than the frequently inefficient one, to young minds, of accumulating a stock of learning, and the benefit derived from an exercise of the mind. These divisions are four in number: the first comprises boys from sixteen to twenty years of age; the second, from fourteen to sixteen; the third, from twelve to fourteen; and the fourth, or Petit Collège, from seven to fourteen.

Passing from the dirty, ill-paved Rue S. Jacques, through a small side-door, to the concierge, I was first of all shewn the *parloirs*, dull salons with a great number of chairs, and a single stove, which seemed, on this cold February day, to impart a still more comfortless air to the room. Here the pupils receive the visits of their parents when they care to visit them, or when they are desirous of finding out the progress their sons are making by examining the weekly notes of the professors. Should, however, the boys be country lads, and far from home, it is here that they can see the 'accredited correspondents' who stand to them, and also to the Lycée, for the time being, in the place of their parents. For there is a rule that every boy whose home is far from Paris must have some one in the town to represent the father, to whose house he can go when a *sortie* is given, and he is permitted to visit the outside world as a reward for good conduct, or upon the written application of a relation. One of the few pleasures of a schoolboy in Paris is to wander with an old companion, now in the army, or at the Ecole Normale, up and down the Champs-Élysées; or cultivate his theatrical taste by a comedy at the Français, or an operetta with lively music and low morality at the Variétés or Gaîté. Go to any theatre during the *Jours des Gras*, for instance, and you cannot fail to notice these boys, old and young, eagerly appreciating every point: dressed in their military-looking uniforms, blue tunics, and gilt buttons, and the regular army cap, giving to little boys of ten and fifteen an appearance of premature age, which their sharp features and general demeanour tend to increase. But to continue with the building. It consists of five or six blocks, separated by square court-yards or play-grounds; on one side of these is a species of verandah for exercise on rainy days; but from the centre of each yard nothing is to be seen but walls, windows, and sky. The buildings, again, are neither cheerful nor remarkably clean. Indeed, were I to compare a French Lycée and a large and first-rate English prison, I should most certainly, as regards cleanliness and cheerfulness at any rate, give the palm to Kirkdale or Salford Jail, rather than to the Lycée Impérial Louis le Grand. In the court-yards, boys were playing without any appearance of great spirit or delight; they have three hours each day for amusement, but only one hour at a time. Their games are generally some kind of ball, but I think they do not possess racket, tennis, or fives' courts, in which to cultivate any difficult or scientific game of this sort. A maître d'étude was standing watching the boys with a gloominess which would not have been unfitting to the Eugene Aram of Hood's poem; and I could not fail to notice generally that those whom I happened to see did not give me the impression of being blessed with a great spirit of cheerfulness. In one or two instances, they did not seem to be treated with much respect; one, indeed, was being unmistakably 'chaffed'; nor is this to be wondered at, seeing that neither intellectual nor moral guarantees of fitness are required. Though—to return again to the subject of physical exercise—these three hours may seem but small, it must not be forgotten that swimming, fencing, and gymnastics form part of the school-course; but still, from the very fact of their forming part of the regular studies, much of their benefit is lost. The reaction of freedom consists quite as much in

the spirit in which such exercises are carried out, as in the actual exercises, as in the mere developing of a boy's biceps with a dumb-bell, or of his eye by the quickness with which he uses his foil. In France, as in England, smoking among schoolboys is strictly forbidden. Yet here, as there, the strange fascination of a pipe or cigar is all-powerful, and boys do smoke to a considerable extent. Next in order come the *salles de lecture*, or class-rooms, long low rooms, very like a national school in England, with forms for the pupils, a raised desk on one side for the master. Then, through some cold passages and up some still colder stone stairs, I reached a mess-room, with tables laid out for dinner; at one end was a sort of pantry. The whole was barely furnished. Indeed, Mr Froude, with all his love of academic simplicity, could not have wished for anything in greater contrast to the luxury of the age and of the city of which this was the greatest school, than the whole of the arrangements of the Lycée. By the side of each plate, however, stood a silver goblet, which is supplied by the parents when the boys enter. There are three meals—breakfast, dinner, and supper. Breakfast consists of bread and soup, one day in the week of bread and coffee: dinner, of soup, meat, and dessert—the last, of course, being an unusually large term in France, and consisting of something more than almonds and raisins: and supper is like breakfast. No Etonian luxuries are allowed. Thence my guide led me to the second floor. Facing each other were two rooms: one on the left for preparing lessons and for general school purposes; the opposite one is a dormitory. Small curtainless iron bedsteads run down each side, perhaps thirty in number; at one end is a larger and more pretentious-looking couch; in this the maître d'étude sleeps. In the centre was what I almost at first thought was a metal fountain, about two feet and a half in height, with a centre-piece, and festooned with towels; it was the only lavatory; and to it there is a rush in the morning, a hasty dabbling of hands and face, and the pupils have washed. They rise at half-past seven o'clock, and go to bed at eight. Finally, I visited the *cabinets de musique*. There was a narrow passage, on each side a number of cells, in each cell a piano. In here a single pupil is turned, and his progress can be watched through a peep-hole in the door, with occasional visits and explanations from the master. It did not seem to differ much in cheerfulness from the occupation of oakum-picking. And with this last specimen of French education my visit ended.

It is often said that the boy is father of the man, a maxim which, carefully noted, is in the majority of cases true. It is impossible, therefore, to believe that such a system as I have tried to sketch can graft in boys any spirit of independence, self-reliance, or thoughtfulness on general matters. It can only tend to depress the individuality of each boy, and to turn him out into the world, well equipped in the barest intellectual sense, but morally and socially a child; and to increase national characteristics which have been the nation's bane for centuries. The whole idea running through French education is the cultivation of the purely intellectual faculties, and the suppression of all else to gain this end. Perhaps we in England, on the other hand, are a little inclined to run to the opposite extreme, and to set too much value on

what is gained socially, morally, and physically from schoolboy freedom, management of one another, and what may be termed general self-government.

LADY LIVINGSTON'S LEGACY.

CHAPTER XIII.—UNDER THE SCREW.

THAT belief which attributes to the spendthrift a soft heart and a genial nature, blemished by the venial drawback of a characteristic inability to say No, deserves a prominent place on the black-list of vulgar errors. Society harbours in her capacious bosom few frozen snakes more prone, when thawed by kindly warmth, to flesh their venomous fangs, than that idle prodigal of whom the word goes forth that he is no man's enemy save his own. In very truth, the profligate insensibly contracts some of the worst qualities of the buccaneer, and notably that hardness of heart which is the certain result of a long-continued sacrifice of the interests of others, of duty, and of all that is noble in life and aspirations, to the craving idol of self. There is many a gentleman of fair abilities and good manners who hides beneath the mask of nineteenth century conventionalism a greed, a fierceness, and an insensibility to the welfare of others, that would have done credit to the ruthless conquerors of old Peru, or to the pirates who, in after-days, despoiled the spoiler on the wealthy coasts of the Spanish Main.

Dashwood's indignation at being held to ransom, so to speak, by Miss Aphy, or Aphrodite, Larpen grew stronger as he strode through the streets, after his interview with the money-lender. The idea of parting so immediately with the crisp bank-notes that he had so lately received, was excessively painful to him. He was one of those free-handed persons, so called, through whose fingers money slips rapidly and imperceptibly. But the easy-going man of pleasure, to whom it would be a misery to deny himself any gratification within his reach, and who gives gratuities and submits to over-charges because he prefers shopkeepers to be obsequious, and crossing-sweepers and holders of horses to bless his honour for a generous gentleman, can easily be provoked to fury by a bluff demand for something considerable. Three hundred pounds! There are those to whom the amount represents almost fabulous wealth, and those to whom it is the easily afforded price of a trained hunter or a carriage from Long Acre. There are others, magnates of the Stock Exchange, or of the swart and sable interests of coal and iron, to whom three hundred sovereigns are as a little loose silver, the fractional fluctuation, from day to day, of Turkish Consolidated; the difference in the price of a myriad tons of rails, or in a million tons of steam-fuel, from the quotations of yesterday.

Three hundred pounds, to one who was perhaps the neediest baronet numbered in that curious order of hereditary knighthood which King James I. invented for the replenishment of his exchequer and the conquest of Ulster, meant a great deal of money.

'She must take two—hang her! I'm not the only one, I suppose, on whom the screw can be put.' So ran Dashwood's thoughts, as he walked moodily northwards. He had not acknowledged

to himself that he was bound direct for Great Eldon Street, and this because he felt some instinct warn him that otherwise the cash would forge for itself wings, and fly away beyond his keeping. He belonged to other clubs than the *Flag*, institutions where there seemed to be some confusion in the minds of the managers and frequenters between night and day, so frequent was the pulling down of blinds and the closing of curtains, and the lighting of green-shaded lamps, when Sol himself was vainly volunteering to shine on cards and players around the little green tables. There, at guinea and two-guinea points, with what you pleased upon the rubber, Whist might be worshipped in company with some of the most formidable performers in Europe, men who must surely have had cards for hornbooks and primers, and whose sympathies with courtly life appeared to be reciprocated, so plentiful were king and queen, and, for that matter, knave and ace as well, in the hands that they held. Major Raffington could hold his own among these pundits. Sir Frederick Dashwood, petulant and eager, could not.

There is perhaps something humiliating in the self-admission of a bearded man, that coin, or its representative, burns in his pocket, and that he can no more, unless by some spasmodic effort he places himself beyond temptation, avoid the fascination of high-play, than a schoolboy can pass the tarts in a pastry-cook's window. But Dashwood, if he felt any qualms on this account, crushed them down. As he reached South Audley Street, he owned to himself that he was about, in his own words, to 'pay off the jade, little Larpen, and have done with her;' and as he did so, the veins on his low forehead swelled, and he swore an oath, and clenched his muscular right hand, as he groaned over the unlucky fastidiousness of modern social arrangements, rendering it as they did a matter of quasi impossibility to insure Aphy's silence on easier and cheaper terms. He even paced, angrily, twice or thrice the length of the narrow thoroughfare, to and fro, half mechanically opening and reclosing his strong fingers, as if in the act of compressing a hated throat; but presently he found himself the object of attention to a patrolling policeman, and with a scornful laugh at his own reverie, he turned away.

Great Eldon Street is not very remote from South Audley Street, and at the corner of the former stands a public-house, where stable-helpers, grooms out of employment, mouldy men who polish spoons for lazy giants in livery, and especially mutes and hearse-drivers, quaff their beer, and which is called, indeed, the *Jolly Undertakers*. To the private bar of this ill-omened hostelry, Sir Frederick, after vainly glancing around for better accommodation, betook himself, and here in rapid succession he swallowed three fiery thimblefuls of British brandy; and then sallying out, knocked at the door on which was the brass-plate that bore the name of Gulp.

The name of Gulp suggested nothing to the baronet's preoccupied mind, but the number was identical with that inscribed on the card of address which he had received from Violet, and accordingly he knocked.

'Does a Mr Davis live here, or a Miss Davis rather—since my business is with her?' demanded Dashwood, who saw only a bundle of middle-aged feminine humanity, strongly perfumed with

peppermint and bitters, and topped by a black cap adorned by artificial flowers and straggling curl-papers. But the bundle of humanity suddenly exclaiming: 'Evins! Captain Dashwood—at least Sir Frederick, for I would be the last to bilk any nobleman or gentleman of his proper title, as well becomes—to think of your finding me here, and in such a position, along of Betsy Jane!' The visitor opened his eyes wider than before, and began to recognise the bundle.

'I ought to remember you, by Jove! Mrs Harris—Willis, whatever it is—surely you were house-keeper at Hardup, and nursed me when I was a lad, and broke my collar-bone out with Lord Diddleham's hounds?' he said at last.

'Yes, I was, Sir Frederick. And never did I think to see the day when lodgings such as these would be my dependence,' returned the landlady half hysterically; 'for I did hope to live and die along with the noble family I served so faithful. And I held on till most of the other servants had left, along of the execution in Hardup Hall, and my lord and my lady gone to the continent. But you saw me afterwards, sir, at Brighton, when you was quartered there, and used to be a good deal with the Honourable Frederick, who occupied my apartments there—to my sorrow, I regret to say.'

And Maria Gulp sobbed in real earnest, as she thought of her little all, absorbed so gracefully by the Hon. Frederick Downie, whom she had known as a curly-headed child in a velvet frock, and who might have had some repugnance, one would have thought, in robbing the soft silly creature who had administered surreptitious comfits to his greedy infancy. Even Dashwood, who now remembered to have heard that his friend 'Fribble Downie' had borrowed and spent the savings of this too trusting follower of the Diddleham family, pitied her a little.

'Yes, I heard of that,' he said. But I hope you get on tolerably, Mrs—'

'Gulp, Sir Frederick. Not that the word—which is plebeian—was ever used at Hardup; but being what my parents were known by, it is lawfully mine, like Maria,' explained the unfortunate householder. 'But not wishing to deceive you, sir, I do not get on even tolerably; and what with rent and rates and Her Majesty's tax-gatherer, and hurdygurdies, and butchers' bills, I almost wish I was dead.'

'Ah, well, it's a great shame,' said Sir Frederick, in whom weariness was overcoming the transitory sentiment of compassion; 'and I'm doosed sorry, and some day I'll be glad to hear about it; but I'm in a hurry just now, you see, driven from pillar to post, and every minute is of consequence. Is your present lodger, this Miss Lar—Davis, I mean, in the house?'

The brandy which Sir Frederick had imbibed for the purpose of steadying his nerves, had proved itself, as usual, a double-edged tool, unfit for rash handling, and its effects were palpable to himself at least, for there was a humming in his brain as if of summer flies, and his speech had slightly thickened. Perhaps this last symptom was one familiar to the landlady, for, without any further reference to her own troubles and trials, she proceeded up-stairs to the triangular drawing-room, and presently returning, said, with official solemnity, that 'Miss Davis' was 'at home;' then she ushered the baronet up her darkling stairs. Poor Maria Gulp! her connection with the titled

classes had not been much to her ultimate benefit, yet her heart yearned towards her old employers and their guests; nor had she even much of the gall of bitterness to lavish on the boy, grown to be a man, who had condescended to relieve her of her small economies. Of him she yet spoke with bated breath as the Honourable Frederick. There are creatures so easily tamed that servitude seems with them to be first, rather than what we call second nature. The dog keeps closest to the heels of the worst master. The landlady of Great Eldon Street, sorely tried by duns and disappointment, was yet a sedulous student of the *Morning Post*, cared which Lady Blanche married a peer, and which Lady Flora an iron-master of fabulous wealth; said 'Ah dear!' when a well-remembered countess was gathered to her fathers; and grew quite excited over the list of guests at the Duchess of Snowdon's, or the details of the gay doings at the Marchioness of Blunderbore's fancy-ball.

'How do you do, Sir Frederick Dashwood?' said the elf, as the baronet's tawny moustaches and handsome face appeared in the doorway. 'How kind! to remember an old friend not exactly moving in the same distinguished circles as yourself! How sorry my brother will be, when I tell him of your visit, to have missed the gratification of seeing you!'

All this for the edification of Mrs Gulp the landlady, whose former acquaintance with Dashwood she did not in the least suspect, and for the discomfiture of Sir Frederick, whom Miss Larpet judged, and rightly judged, to be unwilling that his sufficiently well-known name should be publicly mentioned in a place to which he would probably prefer that his visit should be wrapped in mystery. Dashwood had indeed kept floating before his brain some hazy idea of having himself announced as Jones, or Robinson, when Mrs Gulp's recognition had dispelled his incognito; but he partially appreciated Miss Larpet's motive, and scowled as he bowed.

'I have but lately heard that you were in London,' he said awkwardly, and then held out his hand.

That mechanical impulse by which we extend the hand of good-fellowship, as often as not, to those whom we loathe or despise, is so much a product of our actual state of civilisation, that it is commonly accepted as it is offered, as a thing unmeaning. But Miss Larpet, quick-sighted, and prompt to snatch at an advantage, as women often are, did not take Sir Frederick's hand. She swept him a courtesy such as might formerly have been performed on the slippery floors of the palace at Versailles, such as, perhaps, she had learned from French Canadians, in her own land over-sea, and then motioned him to a chair, as comported as if she had been a princess, and he a courtier of somewhat lower degree. And Mrs Gulp slowly closed the door.

'It was kind of you, Sir Frederick,' she repeated, smiling on him, while her neutral-tinted eyes scanned him narrowly. The onus of speaking to the point was manifestly to be thrown on the visitor. A fresh flush of anger at the thought mounted to his cheek, and he set his teeth hard, and a wrathful gleam was in his blue eyes; but yet he bent his head a very little, and contrived to smile in answer to the beaming expression on the

false face opposite to him. He was rapidly shaking off, however, the effect of the drams which he had swallowed, as men do sober themselves, by some instinct of self-preservation, in the presence of danger; so that while Aphy, perceptive according to the gifts of her sex, thought within herself: 'He has been drinking, and will be violent, and then maudlin,' her opponent was really conquering, not merely the fumes of liquor, but his own innate tendency to petulance. Such temporary victories over self are not infrequent. The worthless tippler on shore is sometimes changed by the very sight of blue water, and becomes a careful seaman until paid off at the end of the voyage. The brawling pest of the barrack-yard is steady as a rock under fire, brisk on the march, and helpful in the bivouac, until sloth and drink bring again into prominence the worst side of his versatile nature.

'You know my errand here Miss Larpent,' began Dashwood, 'and you can guess, perhaps, how difficult it has been to me to comply in any respect with your wishes. It is town-talk, I believe, that my grandfather left me little or nothing, that I have all my old debts on my shoulders, and that I no more know what is to end this hand-to-mouth existence, than I know what the weather will be next week. Do you believe that?'

'Yes, I believe that, Captain Dashwood,' answered Miss Larpent guardedly. 'Not that I have much reason,' she added, in a different tone, 'for putting faith in what you fine gentlemen find it expedient to say to such as myself. But I believe that you have found the inheritance of old Sir George by far less profitable than you expected it to be, and that you have sold your soul, in fact, for nothing.' This time he did not redden, but grew a shade paler than before, yet never a muscle of his fair face quivered, and his voice was unshaken as he replied:

'The less you and I have to do with unpleasant reminiscences, the better. Now, Miss Aphy—excuse the familiarity—we were all pretty familiar as to calling by Christian names, and nicknames too, in Canada; it has cost me more trouble than you can conjecture to bring you a brace of hundreds, and, by Jove! I feel in parting, with them as a drowning man might feel at letting go the plank he clings to. What security have I that the payment of this hard-got money will put an end to your demands? How do I know—pardon me!—that you will leave Violet, or myself, in peace for the future?'

'I will tell you, Sir Frederick Dashwood,' said the elf, whose eyes never for an instant left his, 'why you may rely, within certain limits, on my discretion, and on that of my brother Bruce. Up to this moment our acquaintance with your secret has been merely a passive knowledge; but so soon as I shall have taken your pay to be silent, we become, in the eyes of the law, what the law is so uncivil as to call accomplices!'

'Hush! that's dangerous talk,' hurriedly broke in the baronet, on whose brow the heat-drops were now standing, while he glanced distrustfully around. 'No one knows, in a lodging-house, what ears are listening. I remember your landlady, the woman of the house, for years, when she was house-keeper at Lord Diddleham's, and, what is worse, she remembers me, and may chatter.'

'And the consequences, Captain Dashwood—you see the old name comes the readier to my uncourtly

tongue,' said Miss Larpent, with malicious exultation—'the consequences might be exceedingly embarrassing. You are a baronet, after all, and your title jingles prettily enough to enhance the delight which people feel at a shocking story which does not affect themselves. How the newspapers would gloat over!'

'Have done with this, woman!' exclaimed Dashwood roughly, as he started from his seat, 'unless you want to drive me mad. Did I ever do you any harm, Miss Larpent, that you torture me with taunts which, if a man dared to utter, I would?—' He paused, frowning, while the veins on his forehead swelled; and the fierce light in his eyes, and the manner in which he clutched the chair on which he leant, until the frail wood-work creaked and trembled under the pressure of his strong fingers, sufficiently completed the half-spoken sentence.

'Whether you have done me any harm, Sir Frederick,' returned the elf fearlessly, 'is best known to yourself. I have a shrewd suspicion that your advice to your friend Lovelace, to regard little Aphy Larpent as a plaything to be flung aside when wearied of, and his dread of your sneers and ridicule, helped to harden his weak and fickle heart against me when I knelt at his feet, and bathed them with my tears, in vain. I would have made him a good wife, believe it or not, as you list. But a truce to sentiment! I am not made of very tender stuff, and do not often indulge in tender regrets for my lost happiness, or the world's approval. Chance has given me a hold on you, and I do not choose to slacken my gripe, save on my own terms. You spoke, just now, of two hundred pounds; my demand was for three.'

'You don't suppose,' said Dashwood sullenly, 'that with me, or from me, to ask is to have, or that a man with my unlucky reputation can draw upon the Jews as your City grandees drop into the parlour of the Bank of England for discount! Here are two hundred pounds ready, if you'll sign me a receipt, and hard enough it was to rake as much together. Refuse it, and you may wreak your spite as you please, but never a shilling of profit will come to sweeten your pleasure.'

His mind, such as it was, was quite made up, and, as often happens, the immediate motive for his desperate resolve was the desire to keep for his own use a portion of what he had obtained from the Behemoth. The two hundred he must disgorge, but for the sake of these remaining fifty pounds he would brave the worst. Miss Larpent's quick wits divined somewhat of this, and she remembered that policy forbade her to strain the chain to breaking.

'I agree, as respects to the money,' she said; 'but I have another boon to ask. It will cost you nothing beyond a little diplomacy,' she hastened to add. 'I am, as you know, a first-rate musician, and teach singing better than many of the foreigners who grow rich in London on your English gold. You have a young cousin—Miss Beatrice Fleming—and Lady Livingston is wealthy; contrive that I shall be allowed to give some music-lessons at the Fountains. You need tell no more of my history than you please; and with a little tact, the thing can be arranged, since I have set my heart on it; no matter why. Come, a fair exchange: my receipt against the bank-notes and your written promise that I shall be music-mistress to the dowager's

heirss. Here are pen and ink, and we need not delay.'

'It was wisest so,' said Aphy to herself, as she looked from the window after the baronet's retreating figure: 'the man was growing blindly furious, like a bull maddened by the darts of the *chulos* in some torrida of Mexico. Give him a little more rope, and then—hang him!'

THE RUFF AND ITS SUCCESSORS.

THE ruff and the various other neck-ornaments of a kindred nature have a little history, which illustrates in no slight degree the mannerisms and social peculiarities of those of our ancestors who wore them; and towards forming that history, we have gathered, chiefly from very remote sources, a good deal of matter, which will, in all probability, be new to our readers.

The first introduction of ruffs into England appears to have taken place at or about the time of the marriage of King Philip of Spain with our Queen Mary, these personages being represented on the Great Seal of England in 1554 with small ruffs about their necks as well as their wrists. The neck-ruffs consist of one set of folds only; and the diminutive ones round their wrists resemble greatly the larger ones. By the time of the accession of Queen Elizabeth to the throne, only four years after the above date, the ruff had increased very largely in size, as her Great Seal bears ample witness. This seal expresses minutely the court-dress of the time; a hand reaching from a cloud on each side the seal holds back the royal robes, in order that the dress under them may be distinctly seen.

The art of starching, though at this time well known to the manufacturers of Flanders, had not yet reached England; ruffs, therefore, must have been an expensive wear, as the stiffened linen imported from Flanders could not be made to support itself after having been once washed.

In the year 1564, Queen Elizabeth first used a coach. Her coachman, William Boenen, was a Dutchman; and his wife understood the art of starching. Her majesty, no doubt, availed herself of Mrs Boenen's skill, and seems to have exclusively possessed the secret of starching a ruff, till the arrival, soon after, of Madame Dinghen, the daughter of a worshipful knight, who came from Flanders to set up as a clear-starcher in London. 'The most curious wives,' says Stow, 'now made for themselves ruffs of cambric, and sent them to Mrs Dinghen to be starched, who charged high prices; after a time made themselves ruffs of lawn; and thereupon arose a general scoff or by-word that shortly they would make their ruffs of spiders' web. Mrs Dinghen at last took their daughters as her pupils; her usual terms were four or five pounds for teaching them to starch, and one pound for the art of seething starch.'

With regard to the making of starch in this country, we find, on referring to the state papers of the reign of Elizabeth, that the monopoly of the manufacture was secured to one Richard Young, described as a justice, about the year 1588; and in December 1589, there was a prosecution against an infringer on the patent. The subject of this was 'Charles Glead, gentleman, now resident in Kent,

found and proved a maker of starch at one Mr Draper's, a gentleman in Bedenwell in the said county.' Mr Glead, it appears, did not attempt to deny the allegations against him, but confessed that he had also made starch 'at his father's in Oxfordshire.' Indeed, he had the hardihood to declare to the queen's messengers that he would make starch notwithstanding any patent or other warrant yet granted, unless it was set down by act of parliament. We have not been able to trace the ultimate fate of this very refractory gentleman of Kent. Another instance occurs about the year 1600 of the authorities descending upon the house of Osmund Withers of Taunton, who was charged with a like infringement.

The tools used in starching were called setting-sticks, struts, and poking-sticks; the first two were made of wood or bone, the last of iron, and heated in the fire. By this heated tool, the folds acquired that accurate and seemly order which constituted the beauty of this very preposterous attire. When the use of starch and poking-sticks had rendered the arrangement of a ruff easy, their size began rapidly to increase. Those both of men and women, writes Stow again, 'became intolerably large, being a quarter of a yard deep. This fashion was called in London the French fashion; but when Englishmen came to Paris, the French knew it not, and, in derision, called it the English monster.' At this time, he who had the deepest ruff and the longest rapier was held to be the greatest gallant; a proclamation was then issued against both, and selected grave citizens were placed at every gate of London to cut the ruffs and to break the rapier-points of all that exceeded a yard's length in their rapier, or a 'nail of a yard' in the depth of their ruffs. In 1582, ruffs and gorgets, which were a modification of this attire used by the ladies, were probably in their greatest splendour.

Ruffs, in their stiff and formal shape, were considered by both sexes rather as the demonstration of a grave and demure character than an aid to beauty. It was not long after their introduction that the younger ladies, disinclined to conceal their goodly necks from the eyes of their admirers, opened the front of their ruffs, and elevated the part behind their heads, thus incurring the censure of that worthy dissector of abuses, Philip Stubbs. A beautiful example of the gorget, called, in more modern times, a whisk, is shewn in Vertue's print of Elizabeth's visit to Lord Hunsdon; here you see all the younger ladies, including the queen, with their necks exposed, whilst the elder ones submit to the concealment effected by the fore-part of the ornamental attire.

The weight of this new article of dress, when formed of a frame of wire covered with the finest point-lace, was so great, that the 'piccadilly'—a stiffened collar used by both sexes to support their neck-ornaments—was devised. Sir Joseph Banks, in some manuscript notes on this subject preserved in the British Museum, writes, that Higgins, a tailor, introduced the improved piccadilly, and his dexterity in making this article of dress brought him into high vogue with the fair sex. His house, adds Sir Joseph, 'stood on the north side of Coventry Street, opposite the licensed gaming-house at the corner of the Haymarket, very near the beginning of Piccadilly, which was then called the Reading Road, and afterwards took its name from the well-known piccadilly house.' Hone, in

his *Everyday Book*, tells a somewhat different story, but equally worth quotation.

'The picadil,' writes he, 'was the round hem, or the piece set about the edge or skirt of a garment, whether at top or bottom; also a kind of stiff collar, made in fashion of a band, that went about the neck and round about the shoulders: hence the term "wooden picadilloes" (meaning the pillory) in *Hudibras*. At the time that ruffs and picadils were much in fashion, there was a celebrated ordinary near St James's, called Piccadilly, because, as some say, it was the outmost or skirt house, situate at the end of the town; but it more probably took its name from one Higgins, a tailor, who made a fortune by picadils, and built this with a few adjoining houses. The name has by a few been derived from a much frequented house for the sale of these articles; but this probably took its rise from the circumstance of Higgins having built houses there, which, however, were not for selling ruffs.'

The now well-known Piccadilly being thus brought into intimate connection with our subject, it will not be out of place here to set down a few new facts illustrating the somewhat obscure early history of this thoroughfare. We would premise that the introduction of the piccadilly collar is generally assigned to about the year 1614. The earliest printed mention of 'Pikadilla' occurs (as has been pointed out by a correspondent of *Notes and Queries*) in the later editions of Gerard's *Herbal*, issued in 1633 and 1636. Of our own knowledge, we can state that no such locality is referred to in the state papers before June 1631, in which month information is furnished to Lord Dorchester, the secretary of state, that mass had been performed at Lady Shrewsbury's 'house at Piccadilly Hall in the parish of St Martin.' Again, under date of October 23, 1637, we meet with a certificate of the Commissioners for Buildings 'of such new buildings of base condition as have been of late years erected upon new foundations contrary to proclamation, and inhabited by persons of very mean quality within the city and liberty of Westminster: among the places mentioned 'Peckadilly' occurs. In the following year, a complaint seems to have been made that 'the houses near Piccadilly Hall' have damaged certain springs 'serving Whitehall and Somerset House; and in May an order was issued to survey them, and to demolish those through which the water was to pass. Also, in 1638, there is an allusion to a suit against one Mary Baker 'for building unlawfully at Piccadilly.' Not until after the Restoration does Piccadilly appear to have settled down as a regular London Street: 'Ayre Street, Piccadilly,' is mentioned about the year 1666.

In the beginning of the reign of James I. the dignified clergy of the Church of England were almost as violent in their censures on what they deemed excess of apparel as the Puritans. John King, Bishop of London, said from his pulpit: 'Fashion brought in deep ruffs and shallow ruffs, thick ruffs and thin ruffs, double ruffs and no ruffs. When God shall come to judge the quick and the dead, he will not know those who have so defaced the fashion he hath erected.' Again, Hall, Bishop of Exeter, in a sermon, after having severely censured ruffs, farthingales, feathers, and paint, concludes with these words: 'Hear this, ye popinjays of our time; hear this, ye plaster-

fac'd Jezabels: God will one day wash them with fire and with brimstone.'

On the visit of James I. to Cambridge in 1615, the vice-chancellor of the university thought fit to issue an order prohibiting 'the fearful enormity and excess of apparel seen in all degrees, as namely, *strange piccadilloes*, vast bands, huge cuffs, shoes, roses, tufts, locks and tops of hair, unbecoming that modesty and carriage of students in so renowned a university.'

Yellow starch was at this time used to stiffen the ruff, a fashion, it is said, introduced from France by the notorious Mrs Turner, a physician's widow, afterwards executed at Tyburn for poisoning Sir Thomas Overbury. She was sentenced, writes one historian, to be hanged in her yellow tiffany, ruffs and cuffs, she being the first inventor and wearer of that horrid garb; and never, since then, we are told, was any one seen to wear the like. This last statement is hardly in accordance with facts, though it is certain that the 'horrid garb' was left off both by ladies and gentlemen in the reign of King Charles I. That monarch is represented, on the coins of the two first years of his reign, in a stiff starched ruff; on those of the fourth and fifth years, in an unstarched ruff falling down on his shoulders; and afterwards uniformly in a falling band. The judges continued the use of them much longer, wearing them, indeed, as a mark of gravity and decorum till the falling band was superseded by the perukes, as will be shewn hereafter. Whitelocke writes, in his *Memorials*, under the year 1635: 'At the quarter-sessions at Oxford, I was put into the chair in court, though I was in coloured clothes, a sword by my side, and a falling band, which was unusual in those days, and in this garb I gave the charge to the grand jury.

... The gentlemen and freeholders seemed well pleased with my charge and management of the business of the sessions, and said that they perceived that one might speak as good sense in a falling band as in a ruff, and they treated me at that time, and at all times afterwards when I waited on them, with extraordinary respect and civility.' The falling band was a deep collar, purporting to be, as did the ruff also, a continuation of the inner linen garments. It was made of the most costly materials that the wearer could afford; by very rich persons, for instance, of point-lace. It hung deep upon the shoulders and the breast, being tied before with a string and tassels. The point-lace bands were generally made with deep jags, and are frequently represented in Van Dyck's pictures. Evelyn, in describing a medal of Charles I. struck in 1633, speaks of the 'falling band' worn by his majesty, 'which new mode succeeded the cumbersome ruff, but neither did the bishops nor the judges give it over so soon, the Lord-keeper Finch being, I think, the very first.'

In a very rare work, published in 1638, and entitled, *The Truth of our Times; revealed out of one Man's Experience by Way of Essay*, written by Henry Peacham, we read: 'King Henry VIII. was the first of our English kings that ever wore a band round his neck, and that very plain, without lace, and about an inch or two in depth. We may see how the case is altered; he is not a gentleman, nor in the fashion, whose band of Italian cut-work now standeth him not at the least three or four pounds—yea, a seamstress in Holborn told me that there are of threescore pound price a piece; and

shoe-ties, that go under the name of roses, from three, four, and five pounds the pair.' Elsewhere, the same writer speaks, referring to the time of Elizabeth, of the 'huge ruffs that stood out like cart-wheels about their necks;' and in the enumeration of all the new fashions from France includes 'piccadillies, now out of request.'

The Civil War soon after put an end to all ornamental apparel. The Roundheads scarce deigned to comb their shaggy locks, much less would they ornament their persons; while the gloomy severity of the times held the fair sex under much restraint. At the Restoration, King Charles II. brought with him the peruke, which was quickly adopted by his courtiers and his lawyers, who still retain it, as they formerly retained the ruff, when all other classes of men had abandoned it. The peruke destroyed at once all the costly extravagance of the falling band; this may have been one of the reasons for its rapid adoption. A peruke, though at first a costly purchase, lasted long with little change; whilst the laced bands, almost as costly at first as the peruke, were continually subject to renewal or repair. The curls of the peruke entirely covered the shoulders both behind and before, so that no part of the band could be seen but a little in front under the chin. The band remained at first in the form of two wide slips in front, tied as usual under the chin; by degrees these bands diminished in size, differently among different orders of people. 'Their remains,' writes Sir Joseph Banks, 'are still to be seen in the laced bands of the lawyers when in full dress, the long bands used by them in the courts, and the slips of hemmed cambric used by the clergy; but little do the wearers reflect that these little pocket adjustments, preserved from Sunday to Sunday between the leaves of a prayer-book, are the surviving representatives of vast cumbersome ruffs, and of costly sheets of lace or fine linen, the charge of which is now spared to them, and may be appropriated to the comforts of their families or the necessities of the poor.'

The following advertisement, taken from the *Mercurius Publicus* of May 8, 1662, is a not unapt illustration of our subject: 'A cambric whisk, with Flanders lace, about a quarter of a yard broad, and a lace turning up about an inch broad, with a stock in the neck, and strap hangers down before, was lost between the New Palace and Whitehall. Reward twenty shillings.'

The introduction of perukes rendered the large stocks of lace and other costly materials of which these bands were made entirely useless; and in order to bring these again into fashion, the laced cravat or neckcloth appears to have been invented in the middle of the reign of Charles II. In the reign of William and Mary, this fashion was very general, but it did not last long, not much longer, perhaps, than was necessary to wear out the original stocks of lace, which in this limited use would continue serviceable for one generation at least.

To these laced cravats the stock succeeded, buckled behind the neck, and plaited with many folds, more, however, for use than for ornament. 'In our times,' to quote Banks once more, referring, of course, to the end of the last century, 'the splendid neck-ornaments of our forefathers have been debased into the half-handkerchief neck-band, used as a covering to a quilted stiffening; and this scanty remnant of linen, seldom very fine, used merely

to give a clean outside appearance to a dirty half-worn stiffening, is called by the respectable appellation of a cravat.'

IN EXILE.

THE sea at the crag's base brightens,
And shivers in waves of gold;
And overhead, in its vastness,
The fathomless blue is rolled.
There comes no wind from the water,
There shines no sail on the main,
And not a cloudlet to shadow
The earth with its fleecy grain.
Oh, give in return for this glory,
So passionate, warm, and still,
The mist of a Highland valley—
The breeze from a Scottish hill.

Day after day glides slowly,
Ever and ever the same;
Seas of intensest splendour,
Airs which smite hot as flame.
Birds of imperial plumage,
Palms straight as columns of fire,
Flutter and glitter around me;
But not so my soul's desire.
I long for the song of the laverock,
The catarract's leap and flash,
The sweep of the red deer's antlers,
The gleam of the mountain ash.

Only when night's quiescent,
And peopled with alien stars,
Old faces come to the casement,
And peer through the vine-leaved bars.
No words! but I guess their fancies—
Their dreamings are also mine—
Of the land of the cloud and heather—
The region of Auld Lang Syne.
Again we are treading the mountains,
Below us broadens the firth,
And billows of light keep rolling
Down leagues of empurpled heath.

Speed swift through the glowing tropics,
Stout ship, which shall bear me home;
O pass, as a God-sent arrow,
Through tempest, darkness, and foam.
Bear up through the silent girdle
That circles the flying earth,
Till there shall blaze on thy compass
The lode-star over the North,
That the winds of the hills may greet us,
That our footsteps again may be
In the land of our heart's traditions,
And close to the storied sea.

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